



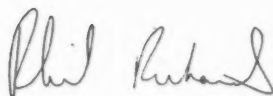
**CITY OF SASKATOON
2006 PRODUCTIVITY IMPROVEMENTS**

Presented to City Council, April 16, 2007

INTRODUCTION

With the support of the Saskatoon Chamber of Commerce, the City of Saskatoon will strive on a continuous basis to improve efficiencies and to work more effectively.

This annual report summarizes the achievements made by each of the five departments in 2006.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Phil Richards". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Phil" and last name "Richards" clearly distinguishable.

Phil Richards
City Manager

COMMUNITY SERVICES

Automation of Plumbing Permits and Inspections

The automated Plumbing Permit and Inspections Program was implemented in 2006. The new system will replace the current manual system that is very labour intensive with respect to application processing, cash handling, inspection bookings, inspection reports, and general program statistical reports. In addition, we are now offering the plumbing contractors the option of paying for the plumbing permit on account and accepting permit applications via fax or e-mail. Prior to automation, the plumbing contractors were limited to submitting their applications along with payment of fee via regular mail, courier, or in person.

System Access Improvements

In 2006 a formal system was implemented to request permission to access a Community Services computer application or computer document by an employee. The new system establishes a method to request, track, and monitor charges to a person's access to Community Services computer applications and computer documents. Efficiencies should be gained in providing a person access to a computer application or document, ensuring the business owner of the computer system or computer document has approved the request and reporting on what systems an individual employee has access to.

Staff Efficiency

Neighbourhood Safety is now being incorporated into the Local Area Plans (LAP). This makes better use of both staff and community members' time and shortens the response time to neighbourhood safety issues.

LAP implementation is now tracked in POSSE (work management tracking system database). Custom reports can now easily be created for Administration to gauge progress in each neighbourhood.

LAP Implementation Reports and Safety Audit Reports are all on-line on the Local Area Planning website. Making this information available has reduced the number of inquiries about local area planning from the public.

Two POSSE reports were created for the Enterprise Zone to track new commercial permits and permits for one and two-unit dwellings.

More Effective Policy

A policy change in the Affordable Housing Program allows for-profit enterprises to access incentives, and further increases the potential for more affordable housing in Saskatoon.

A renewal and amendment to the Enterprise Zone Program increased the level of incentives offered.

New Business Start-up Guide

The New Business Start-up Guide, both hard copy and on-line, provides an effective first point of contact for the establishment of new businesses in Saskatoon. Links to other government departments and organizations offering support to new business ventures are also included on the website.

Streamlining Provincial Legislation

The City worked with the Province on amendments to *The Planning and Development Act* and Liquor and Gaming Legislation to more effectively manage new developments, in terms of application processes and overall public acceptance.

Golf Courses

The most recent phase of the Holiday Park Golf Course Redevelopment Plan was completed in mid-May and opened to the public on May 20, 2006. This phase of redevelopment was well received by golfers and visitors alike, as it included beautification of the property surrounding the clubhouse. Drainage issues were also addressed and alleviated upon completion of this phase of redevelopment. The construction of the pond on hole No. 10 eliminated the unsightly fairway alkali that prevented turf growth for many years, and provided for the necessary drainage of surface water during and after rainfalls.

The municipal golf course program was also able to fund the asphaltting of the Wildwood Golf Course parking lot in 2006. This capital item was identified as high priority by the golf course patrons and was well received and appreciated upon its completion in August 2006.

An ever increasing trend in the golf industry is the supply and use of golf carts. Golf cart fleets at Wildwood and Holiday Park have increased dramatically in the past 20 years. The Silverwood Golf Course patrons have only recently inquired about the supply of golf carts for their use. Historically, the majority of Silverwood Golf Course users preferred to walk the golf course. However, recent demographic changes, and requests by aged and slightly disabled golfers, have been accommodated by supplying three riding carts for patrons' use. These three carts have been well used and are available for rent as available or by reservation at time of booking to ensure availability. Based on current usage and past trends, the size of this fleet will be closely monitored and increased as necessary to meet the need of the golfing community at the City's municipal golf courses.

CORPORATE SERVICES

Business Intelligence Cube

A Business Intelligence Cube was developed and implemented. This tool allows for ease of statistical reporting on utility collection activity, and analysis of the effectiveness of specific collection activities. The time saved in information gathering is significant (from days to hours), and further benefits include an enhanced ability to identify the potential for process improvements in a timely manner.

Interactive Voice Response

The Interactive Voice Response (IVR) system was enhanced to provide a self-service option to the Province's Community Resource staff requiring client billing information. In operation from March of 2006, the IVR handled 2,672 calls that would previously have taken approximately five minutes per call, saving our collections staff about 22 hours per month.

Returned Items

The system for administration of returned items was automated to streamline the process in the Remittances, Accounting, and Collections sections of the Treasurer's Office. The benefits include staff time-savings as well as enhanced ease of reconciliation.

Data Entry Process

Changes have been made to streamline the data entry process. A system generated voucher number is now used rather than keying in a manual number, thus saving keying and batching time. Additional changes have been implemented on the computer screen, also resulting in decreased keying time.

Implementing a change in the data entry process, to alleviate the need to calculate the GST amount entered, has reduced the amount of time required for batching invoices.

Northern Highway Career Fair

In a tight labour market, letting potential employees know about employment opportunities with the City is important. The northern part of the Province has been a relatively untapped resource. Our staff, together with representatives of other organizations, toured northern communities such as Pelican Narrows and Sandy Bay, to promote employment opportunities and educational requirements for positions with the City of Saskatoon.

Pre-employment Training for Aboriginal Transit Operators

Transit Operators have become increasingly difficult to attract. To address this, as well as Saskatoon Transit's desire for a more representative workforce, a pre-employment training initiative was undertaken with the Saskatoon Tribal Council and the Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies. This initiative provides training of Aboriginal people interested in a career as a Transit Operator. The program was conducted by one of our own Aboriginal Transit Operators.

FIRE AND PROTECTIVE SERVICES DEPARTMENT

Computer-Aided Dispatch System

In December 2006, the emergency purchase of a new computer-aided dispatch system was approved by the Budget Committee to replace the CriSys Dispatch System.

Because of serious issues with the inability to record required critical benchmark data associated with an emergency incident, Administration felt that staying with the current CriSys System would only further jeopardize the Department's operability and efficiency.

A new Computer-Aided Dispatch System will provide Fire and Protective Services with a more efficient and reliable tool for dispatching alarms, as well as offering a much more flexible and detailed records management program for all emergency and non-emergency functions of the Department.

Additional Fire Fighters and Dedicated Aerial Apparatus on East Side of City

In order to maintain substantial compliance with NFPA 1710, additional resources were needed on the east side of the City. Although design and construction of a new east side fire station was deferred, a capital project was put forward to purchase a new pumper apparatus. The new fire truck is scheduled to arrive in April 2007. At that time the fire engine/aerial apparatus, running as a front-line engine out of No. 9 Station (Attridge and Kenderdine), will be re-assigned to No. 6 Station (Acadia and Taylor) as a designated east side aerial. In addition to purchasing another apparatus, fourteen new fire fighters were hired in October 2006, two to bring all four battalions up to even numbers, and twelve to fully staff the east side aerial. Although this does not completely alleviate concerns with future growth and the four- and eight-minute benchmarks, it will address a serious deficit of service delivery on the east side of the City.

Home First Program

The Home First Program was implemented by the Provincial Department of Community Resources/Saskatchewan Housing Corporation to provide the means and incentive for families to secure adequate shelter. The City of Saskatoon entered into an agreement with Community Resources whereby accommodations rented to families or individuals that are clients of Community Resources would be inspected prior to the individuals receiving an increased income supplement. Saskatoon Fire and Protective Services conducts these inspections. The City is paid a fixed fee of \$78,000, payable quarterly, based on an average of 20 inspections per week at a cost of \$75 per inspection, up to a maximum of 1,040 inspections. For each inspection in excess of the maximum number, Community Resources pays the City an additional \$75 per inspection, payable monthly.

Safe Housing Initiative

The Safe Housing Initiative was established to help improve the safety and quality of rental housing in Saskatoon. This initiative started in late fall 2005 and was officially launched on January 12, 2006.

The Safe Housing Initiative brings together representatives from Saskatoon Fire and Protective Services, the Community Services Department, Saskatoon Health Region, Saskatoon Police Service, Department of Justice (SCAN – Safe Communities and Neighbourhoods), Community Resources, and the Saskatoon Housing Authority. This group shares information from their respective areas, and each agency has different tools to help ensure the health and safety of people and the communities in which they live. The Safe Housing Initiative enforces building standards, fire safety, and health bylaws for rental housing. Inadequate and unsafe residences will be brought up to acceptable standards or closed. Properties that are suspected and/or reported to an agency as possibly being involved in or supporting criminal activity will be referred to Police. By working in partnership, and pooling their information and resources, these agencies are more effective in improving our neighbourhoods.

Motion Sensors in Fire Stations

Saskatoon Fire and Protective Services, in association with the Facilities Branch, has completed implementation of a project to significantly reduce energy consumption within the Department. Motion sensors, connected to apparatus floor lighting systems, have been installed in all fire stations. The lighting system will remain off until it is needed, activated by movement of personnel or apparatus.

INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES

Safety Checks

Incorporation of safety checks and repairs on the more than 100 civic play structures into one job responsibility has saved costs and improved safety and service to the public.

Modifications to New Equipment

Modifications are made to new equipment based on the history of breakdowns in the particular environment. For example, modifications were made to strengthen the gearbox on the snow blowers to improve reliability and to extend the useful life of this equipment.

LED Conversion

The conversion of traffic signal incandescent bulbs to light emitting diodes (LED) was expanded. As of December 31, 2006, 50 of the City's 230 intersections were using LED signals. LED technology offers many advantages over the conventional incandescent bulb system - the most significant being reduced power consumption. LED signals consume less than 20 watts as compared to 135 watts with the incandescent bulbs. This energy savings translates to a 78% to 90% cost saving on electrical bills.

In addition to energy savings, LED lamps have up to an eight-year life span, so they don't need to be replaced as often as incandescent bulbs. This will reduce maintenance costs and traffic disruptions associated with the annual bulb replacement program. Finally, when LED signals begin to fail, they start to dim instead of going completely dark. This is due to the fact that not all of the individual LED components burn out at the same time. This, along with the enhanced brightness of the LED signals, increases the safety for motorists on the roadway.

Mapguide Conversion

The conversion from a hard-copy filing system for all drawings, to a digital format within Mapguide was completed. This includes pavement marking drawings, signing, traffic signal plans, as-built plans, etc. This will improve productivity by making all plans easy to retrieve and universally available to all employees.

Construction Services

Drawings and standard specifications for water and sewer and roadways construction have been placed on the City's website to eliminate the high cost of printing and updating the previous manuals. Contractors can now access, download and print current versions of the drawings and specifications that are required for bidding purposes. In addition, the response time to implement changes to the specifications and drawings has been vastly reduced. An automated e-mail notification service has been included to provide notice whenever changes are made.

Water Meter Change-Out Program for City Parks

The seasonal water meter change-out program continued. Approximately 75 meters have been changed from a four-inch to a three-inch meter, with a cost savings to the Park's program budget of approximately \$27,500.

Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED)

The Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) principals were utilized throughout the Park's design process, during review of submitted designs, and as part of the corporate CPTED working group.

UTILITY SERVICES DEPARTMENT

Garbage Conversion

Conversion of the Pleasant Hill neighbourhood from rear-lane, communal 300 gallon garbage containers to front-street 100 gallon containers was completed in September, 2006. Although there is not a full complement of data, we are already benefiting from a reduction in vandalism, burnt containers and complaint calls.

Household Hazardous Waste Days

The creation of a new program for Household Hazardous Waste Days now provides 17 days throughout the year where residents can drop off their household hazardous waste, up from the previous two days per year. This provides better service to the public and is a low maintenance service for Environmental Services.

Waste Collection Communication

Environmental Protection Officers have been provided with radios to communicate with waste collection truck operators, resulting in faster response times to priority complaints, and reduced travel time.

Compost Depot

The creation of an east side compost depot reduces travel time for some residents who are dropping off leaves and grass. It provides an option for residents to compost rather than throwing compostable material into garbage containers.

Landfill Improvements

Introduction of a new weigh-in, weigh-out system, and installation of a security camera and gates at the Landfill have reduced line ups, increased vehicle processing time, improved security and staff efficiency, and allowed for more accurate readings.

Electrical Contractor's Service Guide

Saskatoon Light & Power has prepared an Electrical Contractor's Service Guide. The information in this Guide will assist the electrical contractors in Saskatoon in completing their electrical work to the standards established in the Electrical Code and to Saskatoon Light & Power's requirements. A notice was sent out to electrical contractors in Saskatoon advising them that this Guide is available on the City's website. The accessibility of this information will reduce the number of service inquiries that are presently handled by Utility Services staff.

Annual Report – Saskatoon Light & Power

Saskatoon Light & Power has published its annual report on the City of Saskatoon website. The general public can now easily access information and statistics without having to call or request a copy of the report. This saves time and expense and provides greater customer satisfaction.

Electrical Cable Injection

Saskatoon Light & Power has an ongoing capital project that funds the injection of aging underground cables with an insulating fluid before they fail and cause power outages. The insulating fluid is expected to extend the life of these cables by at least 20 years, at approximately one-half to two-thirds the cost of cable replacement. As there is very little excavation required, considerably more cable can be injected in one year than can be replaced. The reduced property restoration required, and reduced power outages improve customer satisfaction.

Electrical Voltage Conversion

Saskatoon Light & Power has an ongoing capital project that funds conversion of our aging 4.160 volt distribution system to 14,400 volts. This conversion reduces our losses, improves reliability to our customers, and significantly reduces the maintenance man-hours required to maintain the system as there is less equipment to maintain.

Electrical Substations Upgrades

Saskatoon Light & Power has an ongoing capital project to replace aging magnetic-air circuit breakers with vacuum circuit breakers. These circuit breaker upgrades have improved reliability and safety, and reduced the maintenance required. The existing magnetic-air circuit breakers have a number of moving parts that are operated by spring-loaded devices that exert tremendous forces on the equipment. These circuit breakers also quench electrical arcs that occur when the circuit breaker interrupts current. The magnetic-air breakers require high maintenance in order to ensure that they work properly and that they do not fail catastrophically. Vacuum circuit breakers have fewer moving parts and do not operate with the same kind of forces. The contacts open in a vacuum, eliminating any arcs and reducing the chance of a catastrophic failure.

New Transit Service and Branding

The new transit service, including re-branding was launched on July 2, 2006 and has resulted in a modest ridership increase in 2006.

Hybrid Buses

Introduction of four Hybrid buses, which are more fuel efficient, reduces vehicular emissions and extends brake and engine life.

Phone & Go and Click & Go

Customer service was improved with the introduction of two new customer service features. Phone & Go is an automated transit information service; and Click & Go is a web-based transit information service.

Effluent Water Pumping Systems

Improvements to the Wastewater Treatment Plant's treated effluent water pumping systems will allow the use of this treated effluent water, rather than potable water, in many of the treatment processes. It is estimated that this will save \$100,000/year in water service charges.

Wastewater Bioreactor Air Diffusers

The bioreactor air diffusers change-out was initiated in 2005 and completed in 2006. The impact of the use of these new membranes is a more diffuse air bubbler system resulting in better air absorption in the wastewater process stream. This means less air demand due to increased efficiency and less energy consumed by the electrically driven air blowers. It is estimated that this will save \$80,000/year.

Water Treatment Plant Control Systems' Communication System

The Water Treatment Plant control systems' communication system has been changed out from a proprietary industrial communications protocol, to a fibre optic link, which is less prone to electrical interference and provides faster communication. This improvement enables the use of an industrial Ethernet communication form and the migration away from proprietary communication cards that are no longer serviced in the industry.

